

**Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
March 22, 2006**

Doug Tucker (Los Alamos County Fire Department) introduced Helen Maestas, representing Senator Jeff Bingaman's office, to the IWMT. Doug also discussed the magnetic placards that are being developed for official vehicles in the Los Alamos region. These placards will display the current fire danger levels for Los Alamos. A public meeting to present information for Defensible Days will be held at the Los Alamos County Community Center on April 19 at 1:30 PM. Finally, fire restrictions are being discussed in the anticipation of a severe fire season.

Helen Maestas (State Scheduler and Field Representative for Senator Jeff Bingaman) is gathering information to promote coordination amongst agencies in the event of a wildfire and to optimize any response from the Federal Government. In addition, Senator Bingaman's office is available to assist local agencies with identifying Federal grant funding opportunities, and to provide letters of support for Federal grant funding applications. For assistance, contact Helen Maestas at 505-986-1813.

Gary Kemp (Bandelier National Monument) suggested that public information messages could be disseminated through the IWMT and other outlets. These messages and information would heighten public awareness on selected topics related to wildfire.

Steve Shaw (Architect, Los Alamos) represents a group of homeowners that live along the northern rim of Los Alamos Canyon. They are concerned with the heavy fuels that are currently in the canyon. Steve offered volunteer support to assist with mitigation of these fuels and for other fire hazard reduction activities.

Manny L'Esperance (Emergency Management and Response, LANL) is discussing fire restrictions with the Forest Service. The goal is to standardize any restrictions across agencies. Manny is also assisting with hazard tree removal at various points around LANL.

Randy Balice (Emergency Operations Office, Institutional Support, LANL) has received CDs from Marjorie Wright containing the updated Farsite databases. Randy has been validating these files in Farsite. Also, Scot Johnson and Dan Young have been modifying and upgrading the web-based capability for downloading Farsite-compatible, predicted weather data.

Lindsay Quam (Infrastructure Projects, LANL) has been coordinating the cleanup of surplus hydromulch and residual logs at TA-49. This work should be complete by next week.

Walt Futrell (NNSA, Los Alamos Area Office) has been assigned to keep track of interagency agreements related to fire that involve the NNSA. Walt has also been

collaborating with neighboring Pueblos to finalize protocol that would coordinate initial emergency response to fires.

Sandy Hurlocker (Santa Fe National Forest) distributed the latest ERC data for the Los Alamos region. The ERC would be a primary guideline for implementation of fire restrictions and closures of Santa Fe National Forest. In general, if the ERC is below 68, no restrictions could be expected. Closures may result whenever the ERC exceeds 84. Also, the Santa Fe National Forest has been divided into several regions that have been ranked and prioritized for implementation of successive closures. Manny L'Esperance, Gene Darling and Gary Kemp have been collaborating with Sandy in his efforts to standardize closures so that industrial closures line up better with public closures.

Darroll Abeyta (Bureau of Indian Affairs) has been coordinating Bureau wildfire activities with other agencies.

Bill Armstrong (Santa Fe National Forest) reported via email that the Valle 2 thinning and fuel mitigation project is slated to begin next week. The work is expected to take 6-8 weeks and will be done by contract. This project will consist of thinning in 265 acres divided into six units. The first area to be thinned will be the forest stand at the end of Forest Road 181 (American Springs Road). After the contractor is done with this unit the area will be open for public fire wood gathering. The estimate is for between 600-800 cords to be cut. Permits can be obtained at the Espanola Ranger District Office or the Forest Service information office in Los Alamos.

The Climate Assessment for the Southwest project (CLIMAS), located at the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, University of Arizona, reports through its March 2006 Outlook that recent rain and snow brought some short-term relief to the Southwest, but most of the region is in severe or extreme drought. The bottom line is that drought is likely to persist throughout most of the Southwest following temporary improvement. For more information, see <http://www.ispe.arizona.edu/climas/forecasts.html>

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, April 5, at the EOC (TA-69, Building 33) in the Fire TAC Room (124). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.